

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 185
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AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
EUCOM
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
USCINCEUR
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 289

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT,PFOR, PGOV, TU
SUBJECT: POLITICAL TRENDS ANALYSIS: AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE
ECEVIT GOVERNMENT

1. SUMMARY: THE NEW ECEVIT GOVERNMENT IS IDEOLOGICALLY
HETEROGENEOUS BUT LESS SO THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. IN FORMING HIS
GOVERNMENT ECEVIT APPEARED TO HAVE IN MIND TWO PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES-
ASSURING REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) CONTROL OF KEY MINISTRIES
AND GIVING HIS NON-RPP COLLEAGUES ENOUGH MINISTERIAL POWER
AND PERKS TO ENSURE THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT. HE APPEARS TO
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HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN STRIKING A BALANCE. IF SO, THE REMAINING
MOST IMPORTANT THREAT TO GOVERNMENT STABILITY COMES FROM WITHIN
THE RPP. ECEVIT APPARENTLY MOVED TO COUNTER THIS THREAT BY
FORCING OPEN TOP PARTY JOBS DURING THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.
THE HYBRID NATURE OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT WILL NECESSARILY
IMPOSE SOME RESTRAINTS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO UNDERTAKE
MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVES BUT MORE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS THAN IN

FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THESE RESTRAINTS NO DOUBT WILL BE A SOURCE OF FRUSTRATION FOR RPP MEMBERS, AND ECEVIT'S ABILITY TO FORESTALL THE PRESSURES FROM THE LEFT WING OF HIS PARTY FOR MORE "PROGRESSIVE" POLICIES SEEMS LIKELY TO BE ONE MAJOR FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE LONGEVITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE LOYALTY OF THE TEN MINISTERS WHO DEFECTED FROM THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) APPARENTLY WILL BE ANOTHER. ECEVIT'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN THE LOYALTY OF THESE TWO GROUPS WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED BY ANY EARLY GOVERNMENT "SUCCESSES".
END SUMMARY.

2. THE THIRD ECEVIT GOVERNMENT WHICH TOOK OFFICE JANUARY 5 AND WILL LIKELY WIN ITS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 17 IS, BECAUSE OF ITS HETEROGENEOUS COMPOSITION AND ITS NARROW PARLIAMENTARY MARGIN, ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT THE "HOPE" OF THE NATION THAT ECEVIT'S SUPPORTERS HAD BEEN WISHING AND WAITING FOR. NEVERTHELESS, IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS, COHERENCE, AND LIKELY DURABILITY, IT IS SEVERAL STEPS AHEAD OF ITS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR.

3. THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTE AN IDEOLOGICAL MIX RANGING FROM WELL LEFT-OF-CENTER TO WELL RIGHT-OF-CENTER. THE BULK OF THE MINISTERS, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO BE CLUSTERED AROUND THE CENTER. THE PRESENCE OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE FORMER JUSTICE PARTY (JP) INDEPENDENTS SHOULD TEND TO LIMIT THE LEFTWARD MOVEMENT OF THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) MINISTERS, AND VICE VERSA. THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE UNDER-
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REPRESENTED LEFT WING OF THE RPP WILL SIMILARLY LIMIT THE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE SPECIAL PLEAS OF ITS CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS. THE PROBABLE RESULT WILL BE A MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD ADMINISTRATION, HIGH ON STYLE AS BEFITS AN ECEVIT GOVERNMENT, BUT LOW ON MAJOR POLICY SHIFTS.

4. THE RPP CONTROLS MOST OF THE IMPORTANT MINISTRIES--FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE, INTERIOR, DEFENSE--AND EVIDENTLY WILL SET THE TONE FOR THE GOVERNMENT, RPP DEPPRIMIN EYUBOGLY WILL CHAIR THE INTERNAL SECURITY COORDINATING BOARD. RPP MINSTATE CETIN WILL CHAIR THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COORDINATING BOARD. THE MINOR PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS ARE NOT WITHOUT POWER, HOWEVER. REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RR) CHAIRMAN AND DEPPRIMIN FEYZIOGLU WILL CHAIR THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS COORDINATING BOARD AND THE CYPRUS COORDINATING BOARD. (THE LATTER IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF TURKEY'S INVOLVEMENT IN CYPRUS BUT FEYZIOGLU WILL PROBABLY PARTICIPATE IN POLICY DELIBERATIONS ALSO--TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYBODY OTHER THAN ECEVIT PARTICIPATES IN FOREIGN POLICY DELIBERATION. INDEPENDENT (FORMER JP) ORHAN ALP AS MININDUSTRY WILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY OF RATIONALIZING THE REMAINS OF THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY'S HEAVY INDUSTRY PROGRAM. THREE HIGH PATRONAGE MINISTRIES--PUBLIC WORKS, HEALTH, AND CUSTOMS AND

MONOPOLIES--WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY INDEPENDENTS.

5. IN PUTTING TOGETHER HIS GOVERNMENT ECEVIT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD MANY GOALS IN MIND BUT TWO TACTICAL GOALS IN PARTICULAR: (A) MAINTAINING RPP CONTROL OVER KEY MINISTERS AND (B) GIVING HIS NON-RPP COLLABORATORS ENOUGH REWARDS IN THE CABINET TO ENSURE THEIR CONTINUING SUPPORT. IT IS TOO ARLY TO SAY DEFINITELY WHETHER HE HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT HE HAS. IF HE HAS, ECEVIT'S MAJOR PROBLEM OVER THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME WILL BE THE SAME AS EEMIREL'S WAS--KEEPING HIS PARTY UNITED AND BEHIND HIM. BUT IF HE HAS NOT ASSURED THE LASTING SUPPORT OF THE INDEPENDENTS, HE FACES A CONTINUING VULNERABILITY AMONG THAT GROUP--WHO MANY STILL HAVE TIES TO THE JP AND MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY POTENTIAL CHANGES IN THE LEADERSHIP OR MAKEUP
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6. IT WAS PROBABLY TO GUARD AGAINST A REVOLT FROM WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY THAT ECEVIT TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT FORMATION PROCESS TO FORCE A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE RPP PARTY HIERARCHY. AT THE LAST RPP NATIONAL CONGRESS IN NOVEMBER 1976 THE CONSERVATIVE WING OF THE PARTY, LED BY SECGEN ORHAN EYUBOGLU AND DEPSEC GEN ALI TOPUZ, CONSOLIDATED THEIR CONTROL OF THE PARTY ADMINISTRATION. TO THE DEFEATED LEFT WING OF THE PARTY EYUBOGLU AND TOPUZ HAVE BECOME SYMBOLS OF CONSERVATIVE DOMINATION, AND THEIR CONTINUED ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN DAMAGING TO PARTY UNITY. IN A MOVE THAT BREAKS WITH RPP TRADITION ECEVIT HAS FORCED EYUBOGLU AND TOPUZ--AS WELL AS ANOTHER DEPSEC GEN, CONFIDENTIAL

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MINDEF ISIK, AND PARTY GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MEMBERS, MINLABOR ERSOY AND MIN YOUTH CAKMUR--TO RESIGN FROM THEIR PARTY POSITIONS UPON ASSUMING THEIR MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES. IN THE REORGANIZATION THAT WILL FOLLOW, DEPSEC GEN MUSTAFA USTUNDAG, WHO HAS IN THE PAST BEEN ABLE TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF BOTH WINGS OF THE PARTY, APPEARS TO BE IN THE BEST POSITION TO SUCCEED EYUBOGLU AS SEC GEN. ANOTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATE IS FORMER FONMIN TURAN GUNES WHO, LIKE USTUNDAG, IS NOT IDENTIFIED CLOSELY WITH EITHER WING OF THE PARTY. THE OUTCOME IS STILL NOT CERTAIN; BUT THE REMOVAL OF EYUBOGLU AND TOPUZ SHOULD, AT LEAST INITIALLY, IMPROVE PARTY UNITY AND ENHANCE ECEVIT'S CHANCES OF KEEPING HIS GOVERNMENT IN POWER FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD.

7. AS WE SAID IN PARAGRAPH 2 THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE OF ITS HYBRID NATURE, IS UNLIKELY TO UNDERTAKE MAJOR POLICY SHIFTS. THIS RESTRAINT WILL BE MORE IMPORTANT IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS THAN IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. FOR EXAMPLE, ECEVIT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GET RID OF CRIMINAL CODE ARTICLES 141 AND 142 WHICH PROHIBIT COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND ACTIVITIES. NOR IS HE LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO NATIONALIZE THE REMAINING PRIVATE ELEMENTS OF THE MINING SECTOR OR TO EXPAND TURKEY'S PILOT LAND REFORM PROGRAM. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THESE RESTRAINTS WOULD WORK TO INHIBIT ANY MOVE TO REDUCE TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO.

8. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE RESTRAINTS OF GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT AFFECT ON TURKEY'S CYPRUS POLICY. BECAUSE HE WAS PRIME MINISTER AT THE TIME THE CYPRUS INTERVENTION ECEVIT APPEARS TO HAVE A WIDER SCOPE FOR ACTION (AND COMPROMISE) THAN ANY OTHER TURKISH POLITICIAN. THIS IS REORGANIZED AND ACCEPTED NOT ONLY BY ALL BUT EXTREMIST POLITICIANS BUT ALSO BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

9. WE BELIEVE THAT ECEVIT WILL NOT, AT LEAST INITIALLY, MIND THE
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RESTRAINTS IMPOSED ON HIM BY THE COALITION WITH HIS MORE
CONSERVATIVE--BUT CENTRIST--NON RPP COLLABORATORS. THE
COALITION WILL PROVIDE HIM AN EXCUSE TO AVOID TAKING SOME OF
THE MORE ADVENTUROUS STEPS HE HAD IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH
WHILE OUT OF POWER. IN TIME, HOWEVER, SUCH EXCUSES WILL LOSE
THEIR CONVICTION AND ECEVIT WILL PROBABLY BEGIN TO FEEL PRESSURES
FROM THE LEFT WING OF THE RPP FOR MORE "PROGRESSIVE" POLICIES.
HOW LONG AND HOW EFFECTIVELY ECEVIT CAN FORESTALL THOSE PRESSURES
WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING HOW LONG HE CAN STAY IN
POWER.

10. SUCCESS IN GOVERNING WOULD, OF COURSE, BE THE MOST
EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ASSURING THE CONTINUING SUPPORT OF BOTH THE
INDEPENDENTS AND THE RPP LEFT WING. THE SERIOUS DOMESTIC
SECURITY AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH ECEVIT INHERITED WILL
PRESENT MAJOR CHALLENGES THAT ARE NOT SUBJECT TO DRAMATIC
QUICK FIXES. HE WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO BUY SOME TIME BY
BLAMING THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS FOR THESE ILLS, HOWEVER.
THE AREA OF FOREIGN POLICY MAY PROVIDE THE BEST CHANCE FOR
ECEVIT TO DEMONSTRATE HIS ABILITY TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. A
DRAMATIC FOREIGN POLICY SUCCESS WOULD GREATLY ENHANCE ECEVIT'S
CHANCES FOR STAYING IN POWER FOR MORE THAN A FEW MONTHS.
ECEVIT'S CURRENT WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT WILL GIVE HIM FLEX-
IBILITY ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES THAT NO OTHER RECENT RUEKISH
GOVERNMENT HAS ENJOYED. THIS MEANS HE CAN PROBABLY SETTLE
FOR LESS THAN OTHER TURKISH GOVERNMENTS AND STILL BE ABLE TO
CLAIM VICTORIES. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST HE WILL SEEK TO SETTLE
THE CYPRUS PROBLEM OR OUTSTANDING GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTES AT
ANY COST, BUT WE DO BELIEVE THAT, PLAYING TO HIS DOMESTIC
CONSTITUENCY AND WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, HE WIL SINCERELY BE
SEEKING TO ADVANCE SOME OF THESE OUTSTANDING ISSUES TOWARD
SOLUTION. HE NEEDS SUCCESS AND TURKEY'S WOULD-BE ADVERSARIES
MIGHT WELL HELP THEMSELVES BY HELPING HIM.

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